

# North Chicago VA News



North Chicago  
VA Medical Center  
3001 Green Bay Road  
North Chicago, Illinois 60064

September 2004

## NewsBits

### National Health Physics Program Inspection

*This Facility underwent an unannounced National Health Physics Program inspection from 7/15/04 to 7/16/04. The inspection team praised the staff for their competency and in particular stated we were fortunate to have such a knowledgeable and seasoned staff such Dr. Kelly and Karen McKay. There will be no follow-up report required.*

### Someone You Should Know!

*Mike McDonald has been a Biomedical Engineer intern at North Chicago VA since September 8th 2003. Our Biomedical Engineer, Barbara Lavin is preceptor for this 2 year program. Mike has a Master's of Science Degree in Biomedical Engineering from Marquette University in Milwaukee. Unknown to the masses is his true love for the Milwaukee Brewers Baseball team and the fact that he has been their "Bratwurst" Mascot since 1998 until the end of this season. Mike is no stranger to the mascot scene being in charge of Marquette's cheerleading squad 1998-2001. That's Mike in the green hat with his pal, Danny Vega, son of Diego and Judy Vega. Pass the mustard and relish please!*



## Employee Picnic

The Annual Employee/Volunteer Picnic was held on Thursday July 15, 2004. The weather was a gorgeous sunny 80 degrees and once again everyone really enjoyed the fabulous



sounds of "Rhythm City". With a talented band, great food, and a great atmosphere,

a good time was had by all. We would like to thank all who helped with the setup, serving, and especially the grilling of the hotdogs and brats. Special thanks to the Service Unit Crew and also to Canteen Service for ordering the food and helping us prepare the food during the busiest time.

## North Chicago VAMC Sponsors 1st Annual Car Show

The North Chicago VA Medical Center held the 1st Annual Car Show For Veterans on Saturday, July 31st. The veterans, patients, employees and navy personnel were able to view 48 vehicles which featured 9 decades of rides from 20 manufacturers from 5 countries around the world. The oldest entry was a 1921 Stutz Fire Engine all the way through automotive history to a 2002 Ferrari 575M Maranello!

Some of the cars that the veterans were able to see included a 1936 Ford, a 1987 Maserati Spyder, a 56 Chevy Bel-Air, and a 1952 MG TD Dutchess! Another section showed a 1964 Ford T-bird, a Shelby Cobra, a 59 Ford Edsel and a 69 Plymouth Barracuda! The 1975 Rolls Royce Silver Spur fit in nicely with the 1972 Datsun 260Z and all of the Chevy Corvettes! Three employees brought in cars for the show. Mr. Grant Evert of Facilities Support brought his 1923 Model T Roadster. Mr. Clifford Turuc also from Facilities Support brought his 1969 Dodge Dart. Ms. Haley McLaughlin of Patient Services who worked hard to organize the show, brought her 1962 Ferrari 250 GTO R and

a 1974 Lamborghini Urraco. Refreshments were provided and a drawing was held for free one-year family memberships to The Volo Auto Museum. The Medical Center Director, Mr. Patrick Sullivan, presented two trophies. The Patients Choice Award was presented to Bob and Sharon Woller from Salem, WI., who are the owners of a PERFECT 1936 Chevy FC. The Directors Choice Award was presented to Jack Nikolich from Wheeling, IL., who is the owner of a beautiful 1939 Ford Convertible.

The day officially ended as the drivers turned the keys and the engines roared to life, then they slowly pulled away, leaving behind a VA facility filled with smiles and memories.



The Patients Choice Award was presented to Mr. and Mrs. Bob and Sharon Woller from Salem, WI., the owners of a PERFECT 1936 Chevy FC.

### North Chicago News

North Chicago News is published for staff and volunteers of the North Chicago VA Medical Center. Submissions can be sent to [douglas.shouse@med.va.gov](mailto:douglas.shouse@med.va.gov)

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## Director's Corner: "Exciting Times Ahead for VA & Navy"

As I said I would do during my employee meetings, I want to keep everyone informed on the progress that has been made regarding our joint venture with Naval Hospital Great Lakes (NHGL). As everyone may know, on October 28, 2003, all of Navy's inpatient mental health was moved to our medical center and is in building 131-3C. These patients are receiving excellent mental health care from a dedicated multidisciplinary team. The next major phase in our joint venture is the renovation of surgery and emergency room areas. This project will be awarded before the end of the fiscal year, September 30, 2004. Actual renovation would not begin until January or February of 2005.

The renovation will provide four new operating rooms on the second floor of building 133 and a substantially expanded emergency room in what is now our acute evaluation unit. Completion of the work is targeted for May 2006. Once the work is complete, all of Navy's inpatient medicine, surgery and emergency room services will be shifted to North Chicago. This will be a milestone for both VA and Navy, since nowhere else in the country will there be such a relationship between VA & DoD.

This joint venture will mean VA & Navy personnel will be working together to provide the best quality care to veterans, active duty and their dependents. Navy and VA providers will be working along side each other and for the first time in a VA there will be pediatric care provided. As we move forward we will continue updating everyone through town hall meetings, newsletters, the electronic bulletin board and program service meetings.

This is definitely an exciting time as we develop the health care model that future VA/DoD ventures will use to partner.

Like any other renovation or construction project there will be some inconveniences for patients, staff and visitors. We will be a work in progress, but will do everything we can to not disrupt our #1 goal of providing care to our veterans.

I look forward to keeping you updated in greater detail as the project moves forward. As always I am interested in your input, questions and concerns. Feel free to outlook me or Nancy Gember and let us know what you think about these exciting changes.



## 2004 National Veteran Games Winner



Libertyville veteran, Irv Czosek, is congratulated at the National Golden Age Games in Fresno, CA, by Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Anthony J. Principi. Competing against nearly 500 veterans in their "Golden Years", Irv won three gold medals in Billiards-nineball, bowling and table tennis, and a bronze medal in shuffleboard. At age 71, an Army combat veteran of the Korean War, he is celebrating his 11th year of participation. Irv also participated in June at the National Wheelchair Games in St. Louis, MO, where he won a gold medal in archery and two silver medals in air guns and table tennis. This is a personal achievement for Irv who is sponsored through the continued generosity of the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

## New Leader of Police & Safety



Kenneth Stone recently was selected as our new Leader of Police & Safety. Before arriving at North Chicago Ken was the Assistant Chief of Police at the VA Maryland Health

Care System. He joined the VA in 1982 as a police officer for the Baltimore VA Medical Center. Since then has taken on increasing responsibilities within VA Police either at the Baltimore or Fort Howard VA's in Maryland. One of Ken's professional achievements was assisting in the integration of four VA Medical Centers, to form the VA Maryland Health Care System.

Before joining the VA, Ken was a blackjack dealer at the Boardwalk in Atlantic City. He has two daughters who he describes as independent and happy. Ken loves to fish.

Ken also served in the United States Marine Corps from 1971 to 1973.

Welcome!!!

## New Miniature Golf Course Donated



The Wheeling AMVETS Post 66 donated \$30,000.00 to help make our new miniature golf course a reality. Because of their kindness and generosity, our veterans will be able to experience many years of enjoyment of this beautiful recreational facility. At the recent dedication, they also presented a

check for a new gas grill and a shed to store it in. We truly appreciate all that the AMVETS Post 66 do for our veterans.





# Coworkers Honored at the Years of Service Program

## 20 Years of Service

Annamma Samuel  
Martin Cohn  
Roger Bussell  
Stephanie Johnson  
Edward Dean  
Theresa Nicholson  
Louisa Moran  
Joseph Manak  
Aleykutty Peter  
William Morton  
Edward Ardito  
Samuel Moore  
Douglas Shouse  
Peter Higman  
Jerome Weathersby  
Dannie Brandes  
Charles Kenny  
Brad Nystrom  
Lynne Ostrander  
Janine Stoll  
Saramma Mammen  
Bill Flood  
Sharon Schlagman  
Uma Shah  
Zeno Margowski  
Randy Smith

## 25 Years of Service

Marcia Edwards  
Karl Thoele  
Toshiko Takaoka  
Glenn Brand  
Kathleen Jefferson



Myra Rhyan  
Sondra White  
Eric Olson  
Daniel Meier  
James Eckert  
Melvin Russell  
Mary Guillet  
Kirk Proctor  
Margaret Rompella  
Gene Kazlauska  
Jackie Davis

Norman Jackson  
Charles Robinson  
Nancy Ward  
Catherine White  
Luedna Garrett  
Shirley Hoffman  
Yan-Fu Feng  
Ashok Fulambarker  
John Grabowicz  
Emily White  
Mary Schindler

## 30 Years of Service

Phyllis Dizzone  
Ernestine Holmon  
Michael Ellis  
Glenn Holden  
Phillip Nelson  
George Jimenez  
Douglas Adams  
Sylvia Thoele-Ryan  
Corrine Chancey

Sant Singh  
Gordon Gerstner  
Allen Miller

## 35 Years of Service

Linda Wheeler  
Anita Wilson  
Sheran Schaffer  
Barbara Myles  
Evelyn Crenshaw  
Theodore Magin  
Doris Freeman  
Michael Dizzzone  
James Willis

## 40 Years of Service

Odessa Mcknight  
Carol Cohn  
Thomas Christensen

## 45 Years of Service

Eddie Shaw

Congratulations to all of our coworkers!

The program was held on July 14, 2004. A special thanks to Desiree Johnson for organizing this program.

## Exceptional Customer Service Stories

\*\*On July 6, 2004 a veteran and his daughter came to North Chicago VA Medical Center and wanted to let us know that one employee in particular exhibited much sensitivity to her father's needs. This employee is Candious Sawyer. They found Candious to be both caring and efficient. She provided forms, explained everything clearly and they had no trouble following her directions. After completing the forms, they were pleased to find that Candious had time to complete the process with them. The daughter stated "My father, being 80 years old and new at all of this, was understandably nervous and Candious explained everything to him patiently and at a speed he could understand. I know from experience that doing repetitious jobs can get monotonous. It was very refreshing to encounter someone who treats you as if you are the most important person she is seeing that day. It's a rare quality, and I hope you recognize that Candious is a special employee." Thanks Candious for demonstrating exceptional customer service.

\*\*We received a letter from a veteran via the Office of Inspector General that read "Dear Dr. Kramer: Thank you. For being all of what I heard you to be (a great caring physician). My appointment yesterday confirmed that rumor, as well as the simple fact that

you are a woman of some significant intellect. As you experience day to day at the center there, higher education does not necessarily indicate the exhibition of higher intellect. Your question, following a quick review of my file with respect to PTSD, about whether I was bothered by the nearly one hour wait to see you was telling. How very perceptive of you to note and then question. You knew the answer before you asked but were inquiring to see how I would respond to the question. A pleasure to observe you at work.

Thank you for the small talk and banter during the exam. I have no idea what you experience during your "normal" first exam of an older veteran, but I am of the opinion that you are just as caring and attentive. After all, you took just as long on the guy before me, which is about half an hour more than you should (to maintain schedule). I am seldom impressed with the purveyors of our health care system, but the rapid fire crisp teamwork of the crew out front (running the busy desk) and your obvious dedication and interest was most impressive indeed. Thank you. Semper fi,

P.S. Semper fi, in address, is generally only used between Marine friends. As with the wonderful Navy Corpsmen I served with in country, you are deserving of that honorific."

## Volunteer of the Year Named by Veterans of Foreign Wars



Leonard Zaehler recently received "The Outstanding Health Care Volunteer of the Year Award" from the Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Illinois. Mr. Zaehler volunteers at the North Chicago Veterans Affairs Medical Center where he escorts veterans from the wards to church services in the chapel every Sunday morning. "Most of these veterans are in wheelchairs and would not be able to attend church services if it weren't for dedicated volunteers like Mr. Zaehler," says Patrick Sullivan, Medical Center Director. Sullivan continues, "We salute Mr. Zaehler for leading the way in making a difference for our veterans."

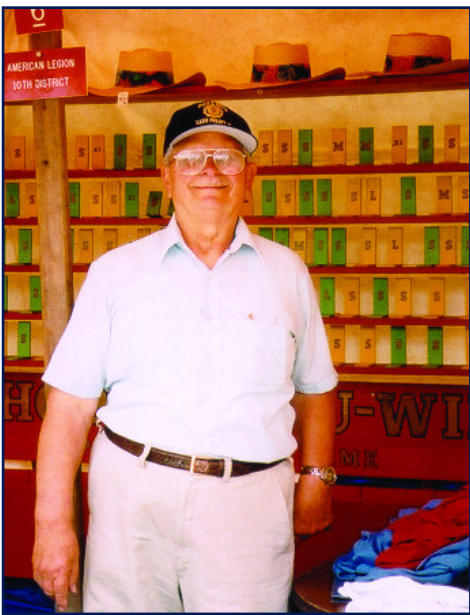
Mr. Zaehler resides in Prospect Heights, Illinois.





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# NORTH CHICAGO VA VAVS Patient Carnival



Our dedicated volunteers from left: Ernest Bischoff, Eugene Nero, Joe Trimble, Ruth Patterson and Eleanor Bischoff. Middle: Harry Fontana and Chuck Hanson.. Far Right: Larry Crone

The 56th Annual VAVS Patient Carnival was held on Tuesday, June 15th at the North Chicago VA Medical Center. Over 200 veterans converged on 26 food and game booths to win prizes and eat hotdogs, pie, ice cream, soda, smoothies, popcorn, and chili to

their hearts content, as they shared their talents at Karaoke.

The Nursing Home Care Unit veterans had their own carnival on June 17th with similar food and prizes. Their entertainment consisted of a live DJ. This year's

carnival was sponsored by over 30 volunteer organizations. Pictured are A good time was had by all.

## American Legion Auxiliary Department of Illinois Makes Donation

The American Legion Auxiliary Department of Illinois donated \$1,800.00 to the North Chicago Veterans Affairs Medical Center in an effort to promote art and music programs for the hospitalized veterans as a means of therapy. This contribution is through the efforts of State President, Gailwyn Starr, who chose this as her "special project" for this year. "We appreciate the continued support and generosity we receive from the American Legion Auxiliary," say Patrick Sullivan, Medical Center Director. Sullivan states, "The donation will be put to good use to assist art and music programs, as part of Ms. Starr's state project."

## The Disabled American Veterans Chapter 83 Donates Van



Pictured with the new van are members of D.A.V. Chapter 83 and Auxiliary from left to right: John Kligis; Marianne Semrad, Associate Medical Center Director; Amelia Jones; Anna Wroblewski; Bud Napier; Ray Jones and Frank Richards.

Recently the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Chapter 83 donated a van to the North Chicago Veterans Affairs Medical Center to be used to bring veterans from the community to their medical appointments at the VA. D.A.V. Chapter 83 raised the entire amount for the van by selling forget-me-nots. Many long hours went into selling these flowers outside of area businesses in all kinds of weather.

veterans is a very impressive achievement," says Patrick Sullivan, Medical Center Director. This is actually the second van donated by the D.A.V. Chapter 83 to North Chicago VAMC. The first van was donated in 2000. Now veterans who have problems getting to their appointments on their own can call 847-688-1900 to get a ride to the VA.

They sold 20,000 forget-me-nots in a 3-year period. It took a lot of hard work and effort coordinated by John Kligis of Huntley. Several area businesses including Walmart and Harley Davidson also donated to this very worthwhile cause.

"Selling 20,000 forget-me-nots in 3 years to buy a van to serve